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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As the legal actions continue to pile up against Microsoft it becomes clear that Microsoft's competitors seek to gain competitive advantage by putting "legal" restraints on Microsoft. It seems amazing that they can be in court for undercutting in one case, while defending themselves for overcharging at the same time on another case.

Had Netscape (now AOL Time Warner) bothered to upgrade its 16 bit browser to a 32 bit browser when the user community switched over to 32 bit operating systems, maybe they would have stayed ahead of Microsoft.

There are choices; we don't have to buy MS products. Apple, Linux, and other UNIX systems are there competing. If one looks objectively at where prices are today, it is obvious that they have dropped dramatically. Windows XP does more today then the mainframe systems of the '80. Many businesses could not afford those systems which were leased for thousands a month. Today the same features are available for under \$300, and you own it. Home users don't have an IT Staff to handle the operating system as was needed on the mainframe operating systems. The point is, there has been a lowering of the cost of software, hardware, and software development due to the innovation of Microsoft.

It is no coincidence that the economy downturn started with this action against Microsoft. What we are doing as a Nation is penalizing a company for being successful, and rewarding those who are unable to compete because they didn't have the vision (certainly AOL has the funds to compete). This action puts our whole software industry at risk if we further shackle one of our main technology drivers.

It is interesting to note that it is not the consumer who is complaining, rather Microsoft's competitors and a group of lawyers claiming to represent consumers who once again are after a large settlement fee. It is time to put a stop to this and let us get back to work on driving the economy rather than throwing America's software technology dominance away.

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